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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 053792

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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---------- 009045
R 050134Z MAR 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, YO

SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV EMBASSY ASSURANCES ON MIHAJLOV'S CONDITION
REF: BELGRADE 1232 AND 1305
1. DESK OFFICER HAS DISCUSSED MIHAJLOV CASE WITH STRBAC, STRESSING OUR CONCERN OVER THE MANY REPORTS THAT MIHAJLOV'S HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED AND ASKING FOR INFORMATION FROM GOY ON MIHAJLOV'S PRESENT CONDITION. DESK OFFICER NOTED THE MANY TELEGRAMS, LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS TO WHITE HOUSE AND STATE FROM MIHAJLOV'S FAMILY HERE, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, MEMBERS OF ORGANIZATIONS LIKE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND P.E.N., INDIVIDUALS RESPONDING TO WIDESPREAD PRESS STORIES THAT MIHAJLOV NEAR DEATH. WE POINTED OUT THAT CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN CASE MAY BE TIED TO CONGRESSIONAL STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EVERY COUNTRY IN WORLD RECEIVING MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM US, INCLUDING FOREIGN MILITARY SALES.

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PAGE 02 STATE 053792

2. STRBAC RESPONDED MARCH 3 THAT HIS EMBASSY HAD JUST RECEIVED TELEGRAM FROM BELGRADE INTENDED FOR EMBASSY'S INFOR-

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

MATION BUT GIST OF WHICH HE WOULD PASS ON TO US ON
UNOFFICIAL BASIS "SINCE THIS IS MATTER OF STRICTLY DOMESTIC
YUGOSLAV CONCERN:" PRESS STORIES THAT MIHAJLOV NEAR DEATH
WERE BASELESS; ACCORDING TO PANEL OF DOCTORS HIS HEALTH WAS

NOT ENDANGERED. IT WAS NOT MATTER OF A HUNGER STRIKE BUT
OF REFUSAL BY MIHAJLOV TO EAT STANDARD PRISON FARE.
MIHAJLOV WAS BUYING CERTAIN FOOD FROM PRISON CANTEEN AND
GETTING IN FOOD PACKAGES FROM FAMILY. MIHAJLOV'S REFUSAL
TO EAT REGULAR PRISON MEALS WAS PART OF HIS REFUSAL TO
ACCEPT NORMAL PRISON REGIME AT SREMSKA MITROVICA.

3. STRBAC HAD EARLIER TOLD DESK OFFICER THAT MIHAJLOV
RECEIVING TREATMENT NO BETTER AND NO WORSE THAN THAT
GIVEN TO OTHER PRISONERS. HE WAS ALONE IN HIS ROOM. (AT
HIS REQUEST? STRBAC SAID HE DID NOT KNOW, BUT ANYONE IN
U.S. COULD NOT BE UNAWARE OF PROBLEMS THAT ARISE WHEN
PRISONERS ARE CROWDED IN TOGETHER.) MIHAJLOV WAS GETTING
DAILY EXERCISE. AT HIS OWN REQUEST HE WAS NOT WORKING.
HE RECEIVED THE STANDARD NUMBER OF CALLERS FROM THE OUTSIDE
(STRBAC DID NOT KNOW HOW OFTEN). HE GOT BOOKS AND NEWS-
PAPERS "WITH PERMITTED CONTENT" FROM THE OUTSIDE AND
COULD WRITE. HIS TYPEWRITER HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY BECAUSE
OF "MISUSE" -- HE HAD BEEN TYPING UP APPEALS TO OTHER
PRISONERS TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT PRISON CONDITIONS.

4. WE ARE PASSING ON GOY VERSION OF MIHAJLOV'S CONDITION
TO INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS. MIHAJLOV'S
SISTER IS CALLING ON EE OFFICE DIRECTOR MARCH 5.

5. F.Y.I.: SENATOR PELL PLACED FLEMING ARTICLE (STATE
050826) IN CONGRESSIONAL RECORD MARCH 2. FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM PELL'S COMMENTS:

--- WE, IN THIS COUNTRY, ARE OFTEN TOLD THAT THE YUGOSLAV
BRAND OF COMMUNISM IS DIFFERENT FROM THE FORMS PRACTICED
IN THE SOVIET UNION AND ELSEWHERE IN EASTERN EUROPE --
THAT YUGOSLAV COMMUNISM IS, IN EFFECT, COMMUNISM WITH A
HEART.
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--- JUDGING FROM THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT'S TREATMENT OF
MR. MIHAJLOV, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT THE ONLY DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE YUGOSLAV AND OTHER COMMUNIST PARTIES IS THAT
THE YUGOSLAV PARTY IS NOT SUBSERVIENT TO A FOREIGN GOVERN-
MENT. AS REGARDS HUMAN RIGHTS, IT SEEMS THAT "COMMUNISM
IS COMMUNISM IS COMMUNISM." MR. MIHAJLOV HAS COMMITTED A
SIN WHICH IS CONSIDERED JUST AS UNPARDONABLE BY TITO AS
IT WOULD BE BY THE HARDEST OF HIS COUNTRY'S HARDLINERS --
HE CRITICIZED HIS COUNTRY'S ONE-PARTY SYSTEM ANDCONTROL-

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--- TITO HAS REFUSED TO GRANT MR. MIHAJLOV PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE. EVEN THE SUPPOSEDLY MORE REPRESSIVE SOVIET UNION, FACED WITH A SIMILAR DILEMMA IN DEALING WITH

SOLZHENITSYN, ALLOWED THAT WRITER TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. IT IS IRONIC IN THIS REGARD THAT TITO HAS TAKEN A LINE REMINISCENT OF HIS ARCH-FOE JOSEF STALIN.

--- I AGREE WITH MR. FLEMING THAT WITH EVERY DAY THAT MR. MIHAJLOV SPENDS IN JAIL, AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP AND ADMIRATION FOR YUGOSLAVIA IS DECLINING. IN REFUSING TO ALLOW MR. MIHAJLOV TO EMIGRATE, YUGOSLAVIA IS JEOPARDIZING THE SUBSTANTIAL GOOD WILL WHICH IT HAS ENJOYED IN THE UNITED STATES. KISSINGER

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